

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'
MILLENNIAL STAR

ESTABLISHED IN 1840

“Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it: And this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”—JOSEPH SMITH.

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PREACHING IN PRAGUE

ELDER THOMAS BIESINGER

EXPERIENCES OF A “MORMON” ELDER AT WIDELY SEPARATED
PERIODS OF HIS LIFE IN FAR DISTANT LANDS

I FEEL greatly pleased and thankful to the Lord for these stated facts, for this is the fulfilment of the long cherished desires and prayers of my heart, which I have been looking forward to for the last forty-five years. . . .

At the semi-annual Conference held in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, October 6th, 1883, presided over by President John Taylor, the names of eighteen missionaries were presented to be sustained by the brethren to be sent to their respective fields of labour. Among them were Paul Hammer of Salt Lake City, and Thomas Biesinger of Lehi, called on missions to Austria.

If I remember well, we left Salt Lake City, on October 9th, stopped over in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and went on to New York, and from there to Liverpool, England. On the way some of the brethren left us to branch off to their various fields of labour. The others stayed with us till we reached mission headquarters, then at Berne, Switzerland. While in Liverpool we were informed by President John Henry Smith of the European Mission, to get our instructions from President John Q. Cannon of the Swiss and German Mission, since no one else was labouring in Austria at the time.

President Cannon permitted us to visit our native town and our relatives for about two weeks, and so we agreed to meet in the city of Munich, Bavaria.

When I had arrived there I waited about ten days for Elder Hammer, and thinking he might have taken another route, I decided to leave for Vienna, where we were to start our mission activity.

After twelve hours of traveling I found myself at the Western Depot of Vienna, the capital of Austria, and I stayed there all night. Early in the morning I went outside of the building and poured out my heart in gratitude and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the privilege of introducing the Gospel message to the Austrian empire. (Elder Orson Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve and W. W. Ritter had been in this city for a few months during the years 1865-66.) This Dedicatory Prayer was published in the November issue of *Der Stern*, in 1883.

AVOIDING BANISHMENT

Elder Hammer arrived, I believe, about a week later. We were quite aware of the fact that we had to be very careful in introducing the Gospel in Austria without coming in conflict with the law of that land. The only way to approach the people was under the pretense of entering a house for the purpose of renting a room or make inquiries at railway stations or in public parks, trying to start a conversation on the Gospel subject. In spite of this difficulty we were successful and baptized two people into the Church after a course of two months; we could also hold a few meetings.

On account of a certain Hugo Schenk and the socialistic element, there was some excitement and agitation in the city that caused many people to be arrested, and some were banished from the country over night.

In order to avoid the danger of being expelled both at once, we decided to separate and asked for the advice of President John Q. Cannon who agreed with our suggestions. Elder Hammer being my senior in age as well as in appointment, I let him choose, and he desired to stay in Vienna, while I chose to go to Prague, the capital of Bohemia, then a province of Austria.

I bade farewell to my companion and my Vienna friends on February 26th, 1884, and arrived the following day in the city of Prague.

I had to look for a room first and found one at a Mrs. Hirt's, Schwefelgasse 466.

Here it was that the Czecho-Slovak Mission was started in the winter of 1865-66, as already mentioned.

At the time of my calling, I was a Seventy commissioned under the direction of President John Taylor as a missionary to be active in the city of Prague, capital of Bohemia.

Ten days after my arrival I was surprised by a visit of my friend and former companion, Elder Hammer, who stated that the police were after him. We spent five or six days together visiting

places of interest, always, of course, with the purpose in mind of trying to make the people acquainted with our message.

One afternoon while we were standing in the park near the Capitol building talking about our condition of spending time and money without really accomplishing much, I uttered words of prophecy, stating that before long I would be called before the authorities of the city and be able to give my testimony to the officers of the court, and after having done so I would be allowed to go free.

On the 30th of March, two gentlemen entered my room in the early morning demanding me to get up and follow them to the police station.

There they questioned me for about three hours and then put me into prison. The second day I was transferred and they brought me before the National Court where another questioning took place for some hours, during which time I had occasion to give a complete account of our teachings, the object of our mission and the restoration of the holy Priesthood by a heavenly messenger to Joseph Smith and others.

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY—MY TESTIMONY

On May 5th, after an imprisonment of thirty-eight days, I was summoned before what is known as the "Five Judges' Syndicate." Again I had the opportunity to bear my testimony in all detail in open court.

The answer to all the questions laid before me filled several full pages of my journal. After this the Court retired for about half an hour, during which time I had a lengthy conversation with the prosecuting attorney. When the court reassembled the sentence was passed on behalf of twenty accusations from people in Vienna for teaching an illegal religion in the country. On account of my good behaviour during my imprisonment I was sentenced to one more month in jail. I was asked by the presiding judge if I had anything to say against it.

I answered, that, inasmuch as His Majesty's Court had found me guilty, I would accept another month of imprisonment with the understanding that the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel message would henceforth rest upon the officers of the court and not on me. The presiding judge repeated these words literally.

After another thirty days imprisonment had elapsed I was released on June 5th, without, however, being expelled from the country. Two days later I baptized a man in the Moldau river. After that I left for Vienna. Please note that the prophecy had been literally fulfilled. I had been arrested and gave my testimony before about thirty-five to forty court members and in less than twenty days I looked down from the window of my prison upon the very spot where this prophecy had been made.

On the 26th of January, 1928, while attending the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Karl G. Maeser, in Meissen and Dresden, I asked President H. W. Valentine of the German-Austrian Mission whether he wanted me to go back to Vienna or to some other place. "Would you like to go to Prague?" was the answer. I jumped from my seat, and raising my right hand up I thanked God for this answer, and exclaimed that that was just the place and mission I had been sent out for, and that I believed with the help of God and my faith and the faith and prayers of the presidency I would be able to reopen that mission no matter how great the opposition I would have to meet.

"You go to Prague," he said, when I asked again, "although you may have some trouble to get there as so many applications have been turned down already."

PERMISSION TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

So I returned to Vienna, settled my other business and prepared to leave for my new field of labour from the Franz Joseph station. I arrived in Prague in the afternoon of February 2nd, 1928. I was heartily welcomed by the good Sister S. Brodil who had been praying and anxiously waiting for the time when the Gospel message could be preached to the people of her town and country.

The first step to take was to make the report of my arrival at the police station, where I had a talk with the chief of police, explaining to him that I had come to obtain permission for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the city of Prague and the Czecho-Slovakian Republic, asking his advice if I should write my application in the form of a petition letter. He told me to do so. I went to work, and it took me some time to frame a suitable letter for the occasion. It was another week till I could get a copy typewritten and ready to be sent off. In the meantime I had been at the police station several times and also had visited the American consul, as well as the vice-consul, trying to gain friends wherever it was possible.

Finally the petition was finished and presented as requested. After having seen two other ministers, I was sent to the Honourable John Czerny, interior minister, to whom I handed my petition personally on March 7th, 1928.

It read: "Thomas Biesinger, authorized missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, office at mission headquarters in Dresden, Koenigsbrueckerstrasse, 62, asks for permission to open a mission of said Church and to proclaim the teachings of this Church in the Czecho-Slovakian Republic."

After half an hour's urging talk, he gave his verbal promise to let our missionaries into the state, provided that the chief of police would also give his consent. I referred him to the peace treaty of St. Germain, Belgium, according to which all other

states had given the freedom of teaching our religion, and I was dismissed favourably.

For several days I tried to get an interview with Dr. Martinek, the head police counselor, who is a very busy man, and succeeded at last to have a fifteen minutes' talk with him. I told him the same as I had reported to the minister; and after hearing how our missionaries proceeded with their preaching and missionary work he consented, giving us full liberty to the same extent we had in all other countries, hoping we would not cause any trouble. I then quoted our twelfth Article of Faith. Asking if we needed written, certified permission, he declared that was not necessary as long as we kept the rules of the city. Then I was dismissed courteously.

Having thus successfully accomplished the reopening of the Czecho-Slovak Mission for the Gospel message, I feel to thank Almighty God for His overruling providence in our behalf, and also wish to thank his honour Mr. Czerny, and Dr. Martinek and all the officers with whom I came in contact, without any exception, for their kind consideration. May the Lord bless them.

REPORT TO PRESIDENT

On the 15th of March I sent my report to President Valentine, informing him of the unrestricted permission to preach the Gospel in the City of Prague and the Czecho-Slovakian Republic, sanctioned by the minister of the interior and the chief of police, and I requested him to start sending missionaries.

In answer, I received the following letter, dated March 31st, 1928:

I congratulate you on the success which has crowned your efforts, and it will be a life-long happy remembrance that you, who forty-four years ago was cast into prison in that city, have had the pleasure to return and give your testimony anew, and of really reopening a city and a country heretofore closed to our message.

It just needs an explanation to be given for the very unusual call to missionary service of a man of my age.

It was about the year 1902, when Elder John Henry Smith met me at South Temple and Main streets, and, calling me his missionary, said: "Would you like to go on another mission to Austria?" I told him that I would like to do that, but that my conditions, financially and otherwise, were of such a nature that it was impossible for me to go. I stated, however, that I should like to go if there would be religious freedom when I would be called, and that I could really preach the Gospel to the people and not only before the court and the prisoners. He then replied: "You shall have the privilege to go back."

It was due to this strong statement I made in the office of the First Presidency in the presence of Presidents Heber J. Grant and

Charles W. Nibley and Elder George Albert Smith, that I was called on my last mission. Although everything seemed to be against me, I had to go back and accomplish just what I have done.

Thanks and honour be unto the God of Israel for His overruling providence in behalf of the freedom and privileges the nations enjoy, so that the Gospel message can be proclaimed in the Czechoslovakian Republic.

JOSEPH'S FIRST VISION

(JOSEPH SMITH SKETCHES—No. 5)

JOSEPH, having overcome the evil forces that attempted to destroy him, then received his glorious First Vision. He saw a pillar of light, "exactly over his head, above the brightness of the sun." It must have been of intense brilliance since the event took place on a bright, sunny morning. Elder Orson Pratt, who lived for some time in the Prophet's household, writes that the light was so bright that the leaves and small twigs of the trees were outlined clearly. The Story of the Vision that followed, is told best in the Prophet's own impressive words :

When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home.

The "other things" that were spoken to him, were undoubtedly of deep import, as appears here and there in his later autobiography. The chief was that he, Joseph Smith, should play an important part in the establishment of the Church of Christ.

When the vision was over he found himself lying exhausted on his back "looking up into heaven." Again he was learning

lessons. Spiritual experiences make an intense draft upon the resources of the physical body—a lesson that, in later years, helped him to safeguard his health.

He had learned also that truth comes in light. Darkness begets error, and only error. That became, henceforth, a test and a witness of Joseph Smith's work. Whatever he did was done in the open, by day and before his fellow men. The truths that he taught were ever luminous in their clearness. They were understandable by all.

The astonishing part of the message of the vision was that none of the churches was right. He had gone to ask which church to join, and he had been told to join none. He was to wait until further light be given him. This was indeed something unexpected.

The most glorious result of his quest was that he had learned that the heavens are yet open. The Lord yet speaks to His earthly children.

The vision had been real. It was not an hallucination, or a product of muddled senses. He had gone, deliberately, to ask a question, and he had received an answer. Joseph's whole life is an evidence of the reality to him of the vision. When he had returned home, he leaned against the fireplace, somewhat wearily, and, in answer to his mother's solicitous inquiry, said: "Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off. I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true."

He had asked a question; he had received an answer; it was not the answer he expected, but it was convincing. It was a secure foundation on which to build life's structure.—W.

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE

BELOVED:

Forever and forever and forever thou art mine;
And forever and forever and forever I am thine!

One we are in heart and soul
Though ages like the sea waves roll,
On the farthest shores of eternity!

Though the sun and the moon grow dark and cold,
Still shall that word "eternal" hold;

Though the heavens as vapour should pass away
And the earth abide but the length of a day—
Though time should give way to eternity.

Founders of races of Gods, are we—
Descendants of Gods in the heavens, you see!

Forever together, we hand in hand go
With love, trust and truth as the lamps to show
Us the way of the Lord through eternity.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1930

EDITORIAL

CAN YOU DO AS WELL?

ARE YOU discouraged and unhappy? Do the troubles of life seem more than you can bear? Are you about to give up?

If so, then read the story of the Kniphofia, or Torch Lily.

Several Kniphofia stood in the thick massed flower beds of the Liverpool Botanic Gardens. The soil of the garden was kept fertile, the season had been favourable, the small family of Kniphofia stood some five feet high, straight as arrows, each one crowned by a cone-shaped cluster of bright red blossoms. They were good to look upon.



One day a careless stroller, swinging his cane, struck one of the plants. The blow broke, but did not sever the stem of the plant. The upper third of the plant, with the crown of glorious flowers, hung loosely downward. It was a broken plant and nothing more.

Then the miracle happened! Destined to look up into the sunlit sky, the plant could not endure its earthward gaze. It summoned all its power. Life-giving juices still came up from the roots. Though the broken stem could not be mended, the head might yet look up into the light.

Slowly, its blossom tip curved upward; then, the next few cells, and the next. It was a royal battle for light, for the right to look into heaven. So slow was the victory over gravity, that from week to week, the change was scarcely perceptible. But, the plant won! At last it stood like a great question mark in the garden, the upper half of the broken part pointing straight upward, into the light.

Thus it stood throughout the late summer and autumn. As it arose from the ground, then bent downward at the place of injury and arose again in part, it hurled a challenge at every fear-pressed passer-by. Sometimes it seemed to ask: "Have I done my best?" but more often it smiled, "When you are hurt, can you do as well?" Broken, bent and humped, a foot shorter than its

fellows, but vanquishing, conquering, winning against odds, it was, that year, the chief of the flowers, the Emperor of the Garden. Men gave respectful homage to the courageous, striving plant.

Are you broken and bent in the rough and tumble of life? Then, use your irresistible will, and draw upon the divine source of strength, which never fails. Such use of the will, with faith and prayer, banishes darkness and despair, and compels light and joy to come forward. Fate cannot crush you if you strive and hope and pray. God will reach out for you; and direct distress may be changed into unbounded joy. The ultimate question is never, "How high are you?" but, "Are you looking upward?" Those who conquer are the masters among men.

Are you less courageous, can you do less, than the broken plant in the Botanic Garden?—W.

MEDICAL ASPECTS OF THE WORD OF WISDOM

THE WORD OF WISDOM, one of the choice gifts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, has received splendid elucidation in a scholarly yet simply worded book: *Medical Aspects of the Latter-day Saint Word of Wisdom*, by Dr. L. Weston Oaks.

The book is a study of the Word of Wisdom from the point of view of medicine. It contains a mass of information concerning the physiological effects of alcohol, tobacco, tea and coffee, not formerly assembled in one volume. The author has exercised the greatest care to support every statement by acceptable, scientific evidence.

Alcohol is considered in its effects upon digestion, parenthood, the nervous system, long life and society. Tobacco is viewed from its effects upon the mucus membranes, the lungs, digestion, the body glands, the heart and blood vessels, sight, mentality, and society. Tea and coffee are set forth in their effects upon the brain, mental activity, the spinal cord, kidneys, digestion, sight and hearing, and the heart and blood vessels. There is a chapter also called Bits of Health Wisdom, dealing with play and recreation, the emotions, proper eating and other important matters.

This valuable book should be in the hands of missionaries and members, both for personal information and for defense of the Word of Wisdom. It may be secured from the presidents of the various missions.

L. Weston Oaks, M. D., the author, is a member of the Faculty of Brigham Young University. The book is published by the University, and is another evidence of the fine service rendered by this great educational institution.—W.

PRIVILEGES

VARIOUS privileges are granted to people of different localities. For instance, in a certain park one may walk on the grass; in another park there is a sign warning the passers-by to "Keep Off" the grass. In some countries there is no restriction against hunting; in other places one must have a license; and in yet other parts of the world, hunting is prohibited. And so it goes with other things. Privileges vary according to conditions and modes of life.

There are also privileges in religion. One may become a member of one sect by the mere desire so to do; in another he must subscribe to certain rules or undergo certain rites incident to that church: And in the true Church of Jesus Christ, a man must have faith; he must repent; he must be baptized for the remission of his sins, and be admitted and confirmed a member of the Church by those holding the proper authority. By subscribing to the law, he wins the privilege of becoming a member, and of exercising his membership for the good of himself and his fellow-men.

It is a privilege to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is a privilege to have health as a result of obedience to the laws pertaining thereto. It is a privilege to be able to come to Church and partake of the Sacrament, thus renewing our covenants made at baptism, with the Lord. It is a privilege to be happy and progressive, ever growing, ever learning more truth, in Gospel paths. In daily life, in health of body or spirit, in paying our tithing honestly, in doing or rejecting our duty, we have the opportunity of using our own free will, our free agency; and if we do well, we win certain rights; if we do wrong, we lose the privileges we seek, and perhaps others which we already possess. Thus we use our free agency in obeying the laws that we or others have set up. And as we seek truth and learn to understand the laws of God in some measure, and attempt to follow them, we win life—now and hereafter—progression, and true happiness—privileges granted to us by the Lord, for our obedience to His rules and regulations of life.

It is our privilege to choose, and upon our choice depends the success of our work in any particular field. We may create a disturbance or we may promote peace, industry and activity. We may "go it alone" or cooperate with others. We have the privilege of using our influence for good or ill. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Privileges are for those who earn them and use them for the betterment of themselves and others. How are we, as Latter-day Saints, using our privileges?

WESTON N. NORDGREN

THE PROGRESS OF MORTALITY

ELDER WILLIAM D. CALLISTER

FOR WHAT PURPOSE have we been placed on earth? How can we shape our lives so as to fulfill that purpose and obtain the best results? There is no effect without a cause; neither is there an occurrence without a reason for it. So we are placed here for a certain purpose, and it should be man's greatest concern to discover that purpose.

Should you ask a group of average thinkers what life's purpose is, you would get various replies. One person would perhaps feel that he is the victim of circumstances, that it would have been just as well for him had he not been born into a world of so much trouble and sorrow. Another would probably have as his life's aim the amassing of great possessions; still another might express a desire to spend his life indulging in all of the carnal exercise of life. But such views are the result of short-sightedness; people with these thoughts and feelings fail to prepare or provide for a hereafter. There are many men in the world to-day who are so blinded by their own wisdom that they do not see the meaning of life; they concentrate on selfish lusts and worldly goods. Many are beginning to doubt an existence after this life; and those who do not doubt it, feel assured of an exalted place in the kingdom of God without having to work or struggle for it.

However, an all-wise Creator will not leave His children to grope in darkness if they will seek Him. He reveals His will and purposes to mankind. In the last two verses of Ecclesiastes will be found the solution to the problem: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." The Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price gives a clearer conception. Abraham is shown the intelligences which were organized before the world was. We read in the twenty-fourth verse of the third chapter: "And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." We are told that those who kept their first estate have been added upon with mortal bodies; and those who keep their second estate, or those who heed the commandments of God while in mortality, will have glory and eternal life added to them for ever and ever.

Could truth be put in simpler or plainer words? This life is indeed a testing place wherein we are tried; and if we endure to

the end, withstanding all temptations, and surmounting the difficulties that confront us, we will indeed be worthy of an inheritance in the celestial kingdom. Is not the privilege of becoming a king and priest in God's kingdom well worth the sacrifice one might make in being spiritually minded instead of carnally minded, during this short space of mortality? If it were not so, we would not have accepted the great plan which was presented in the grand council in heaven, held before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Let us so shape our lives that when we arise on the day of judgment and the books are opened, we can look back on our mortal sojourn with as little sorrow and regret as possible; for we will then be able to see the error of our ways, and great will be our disappointment if we have allowed ourselves to fall when tempted by Lucifer—the Son of the Morning, who rebelled against this great plan and who is trying in every way to thwart it.

OUR CHURCH LEADERS—JOSEPH SMITH

THIS ARTICLE is one of a series of seven, each having as its central theme one of the Presidents of the Church. It is to be studied in the Mutuals, after the present M. I. A. Manual is finished, as is outlined in the index of the present manual.

Joseph Smith (In modern psychology there is but one Joseph Smith).

I. HIS CHARACTER

(a) Courage :

Time devoted to this topic, eight minutes.

Read or recite from memory from *Essentials of Church History*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, pages 32-38, selecting judiciously the material that can be effectively presented within the time limit, or tell the story recorded in the *History of Joseph the Prophet*, by his mother, Lucy Smith, pages 60-63.

(b) The Majesty of His Personality :

Time needed for this topic, seven minutes.

Relate the events recorded in *Essentials of Church History*, pages 243-245, and *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, pages 228-229, reciting from memory the material contained in the paragraph: "Majesty in Chains."

(c) High-minded Estimates of His Character :

Time devoted to this topic, seven minutes.

The following material is taken from chapter 48 of *Life of Joseph Smith*, by George Q. Cannon :

A writer for the *New York Herald* has visited the Prophet and in 1842 that paper said :

"Joseph Smith is undoubtedly one of the greatest characters of the age. . . . In the present infidel, irreligious, animal-magnetic age of

the world, some such singular prophet as Joseph Smith is required to preserve the principle of faith, and to plant some new germs of civilization that may come to maturity in a thousand years. . . . Joseph Smith is creating a spiritual system, combined also with morals and industry, that may change the destiny of the race. . . . We certainly want some such prophet to start up, take a big load off the public mind—and stop the torrent of materialism that is hurrying the world into immorality and crime.”

The Pittsburg *American*, declared that Joseph Smith could not be denied the attribute of greatness. . . .

Probably the most comprehensive view taken of the Prophet by a man not intimate with him was that of Josiah Quincy, who, in company with Hon. Charles Francis Adams, the senior, visited Joseph Smith at Nauvoo on the 15th day of May, 1844, just forty-three days before the Prophet's martyrdom. Among many things descriptive of Joseph, Quincy says :

“ . . . What historical American of the nineteenth century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen ? And it is by no means impossible that the answer to that interrogatory may be thus written : *Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*. And the reply, absurd as it doubtless seems to most men now living, may be an obvious commonplace to their descendants. History deals in surprises and paradoxes quite as startling as this, the man who established a religion in this age of free debate, who was and is to-day accepted by hundreds of thousands as a direct emissary from the Most High.

“ . . . Who can wonder that the chair of the National Executive had its place among the visions of this self-reliant man ? He had already traversed the roughest part of the way to that coveted position. Born in the lowest ranks of poverty, without book-learning, he had made himself at the age of thirty-nine a power upon earth. . . . From Adam down (Adam of the 'Wealth of the Nations,' I mean), none had so won human hearts and shaped human lives as this Joseph. His influence, whether for good or for evil, is potent to-day, and the end is not yet.”

A writer in *Chamber's Encyclopædia* speaking of the Prophet says :

“From his early years he was regarded as a visionary and a fanatic ; a fact which is of the utmost importance as affording a clue to his real character. . . . A mere impostor. . . . would have broken down under such a tempest of opposition and hate as Smith's preaching excited.”

The foregoing opinions quoted from the Prophet's contemporaries and observers—his opponents. . . . are as favourable as could be looked for in a skeptical, materialistic age. . . . The author of the book, George Q. Cannon, writes :

The Prophet was only a man ; but he was a good man, an inspired man, a better man than he could have been without the inspiration of his Master, Christ. In all his actions he was fearless as an angel of light. Not in all that has ever been written or said of him by friend or foe is there one word to impugn the magnificent physical bravery and moral courage of Joseph Smith. Withal he was as meek and gentle as a little child. Disciplined by the Spirit of God, which was his constant monitor, he put away from him alike the fear of men and the ambitions of this

world. These were things which a remote or casual observer would not be likely to discover.

II. JOSEPH'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Time devoted to this topic, eight minutes.

(a) He gave to the world prescientific facts; up-to-date investigation has proved the truth of the "Word of Wisdom."

(b) He produced three new volumes of scripture that have not only survived ridicule and misinterpretation, but have steadily grown in recognition. The last edition of the Book of Mormon had a more ready sale than any other edition. The Pearl of Great Price is studied as it never was before, and the Doctrine and Covenants is adopted as the book to be studied by nearly one hundred thousand M. I. A. students.

(c) Joseph Smith founded the first American Religion.

The editor of the *Forum* of October, 1926, says in an Introduction:

Some readers will be shocked to find included among our confessions of Christian creed that of the Mormons. To them the Mormons seem but a strange folk given over until lately to the pagan practice of an abhorrent polygamy borrowed from the followers of the Koran. Yet a creed that claims a half-million earnest Americans is surely worth a hearing. To the Mormons plural marriage seemed no more related to unchastity than it does to certain scientists who approve of it to-day. It was their patriotism, their recognition of the ethics of the social contract, that made them give up this custom and secure the admission of Utah, the state that their pioneer energy had developed, into the Union.

In fact, Mormon preachers to-day claim that their people are the most Spartan, the most ascetic of our American religionists. They point out that coffee, tea, and narcotics are forbidden in all Mormon homes. They need no Volstead Act. Tobacco is likewise banned. The Mormons of Salt Lake City exhibit the highest American municipal health statistics. Their venereal record in the World War was clean as a whistle. Their elimination of personal waste leads to savings and economic wealth; and like the Quakers and the Jews they produce outstanding captains of finance. One of these experts in national economy is spokesman for the Mormons in this issue of the *Forum*—United States Senator Reed Smoot. The visitor to Salt Lake City is a little disturbed by the Mormon over-emphasis on the material side of living. This hard practicality, however, is relieved by the beauty of the Tabernacle organ recitals and the legend of the miracle of sea gulls that saved the pioneer farmers of Utah.

The Mormon faith satisfies the craving of large numbers of Christians for continuous revelations from on high. They are not content with a Bible closed and sealed forever in the first century, A. D. The Church of Rome has always recognized this craving, and the candles of St. Peter's celebrated only a few months ago new saints' lives added to authentic inspiration. The Mormons, for their part, claim one new revelation after an interval of eighteen hundred years. They are convinced that on September 22nd, 1827, the Angel Moroni delivered the plates of the Book of Mormon to their Prophet Joseph Smith in Ontario

County, New York. And their new books of the Bible are American; they deal with pre-Columbian Christianity among the Indians. The Mormons have rebuilt their Temple of Zion at an altitude of four thousand feet near the shores of the Great Salt Lake. In answer to our European critics we can put on the credit side of the American imagination two new religions, Christian Science and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

III. THE PROPHET'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

He was just six feet in height, standing in his stockings, and was grandly proportioned. In his mature years he weighed about two hundred pounds. His eyes were blue and tender; his hair was brown, plentiful and wavy; he wore no beard, and his complexion was one of transparency, so rare as to be remarkable; the exquisite clearness of his skin was never clouded, his face being naturally almost without hair. His carriage was erect and graceful; he moved always with an air of dignity and power which strangers often called kingly.

IV. HIS GOOD WILL TO MEN

Recite, "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief," said to be his favourite selection, sung in Carthage Jail just before his martyrdom.

The song, "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning," by the congregation is suited for the opening hymn.

The invocation could be followed appropriately by the singing of "The Seer," as a solo, and "Praise to the Man" by the congregation would fittingly precede the benediction.—From the September, 1929, issue of the *Improvement Era*.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Doings in the Districts: *Liverpool*—The Liverpool Branch Relief Society held its conference at Durham House on January 26th. A review of the history and progress of the Society was given. There was a large attendance, which included several investigators.

On February 7th, a District union meeting was held in the Liverpool Chapel for officers and teachers of the auxiliaries and members of the Priesthood and Relief Society, from the Liverpool, Birkenhead and Wigan Branches.

Manchester—On February 1st, a union meeting was held in the Manchester Chapel. M. I. A. competitions were held immediately afterwards, in which about fifty members of the District participated.

Norwich—At a baptismal service held at 60 Park Lane, Norwich, on January 19th, one person was baptized by President Clyde L. Thomas and confirmed by Elder Myrthus W. Evans.

On Thursday, January 30th, the Lowestoft Branch M. I. A. held a social. A slogan and essay contest, open to all, and a debate between four members, were features of the evening, which all in attendance thoroughly enjoyed.

ONWARD, ONWARD, ONWARD!

(Hymn entered in the Centennial Competition)

ONWARD, Onward, Onward! In the battle, fight!
Wield the sword of freedom, wave the flag of right;
Jesus is our leader, follow His command,
Only He can lead us to the promised land.

Long we've heard the roaring, and the battle cry
Of the hosts of evil, as they backward fly;
See their ranks are shattered, order is in vain—
Christians marching onward, will their rights maintain.

On the trackless ocean, or on desert bare,
Out among the heathen, or in palace rare,
Spread the joyful message of the Gospel's worth;
Christ must come to reign again, and peace come back to earth!

Only six men gathered; stalwart, staunch, we know—
Honoured with the Priesthood, Gospel seed to sow;
We are their successors, let us worthy be,
And the blessed tidings bear from sea to sea.

Let the Priesthood keep their armies moving on—
Follow Christ's example, till the fight is won;
Then we'll hear the plaudits, with the joyful throng,
"Enter ye My glory, well and faithfully done!"

Sheffield District

GEORGE W. THOMPSON

DEATH

HODKINSON—Sister Sarah Hodkinson, of Winspard, Cheshire (Manchester District), died on September 7th, 1929.

HUNT—Sister Emily Hunt, aged forty-four, Cheltenham Branch, Bristol District, passed away on January 23rd, after a prolonged illness. The funeral was held at Naunton, on January 28th. Elder Jay M. Smith dedicated the grave.

BRITISH MISSION ADDRESS: A. WILLIAM LUND, PRESIDENT, 23 BOOTH STREET, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM

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